

The Connecticut Libertarian

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Voucher Fun

by Ned Vare

I'm not a fan of vouchers for the reason that they use money that's taken by force from property owners and given to others without their consent. In this era of school "reform," – meaning more government control (not better schools) – new initiatives (reforms) always mean turns for the worse. Nevertheless...

I recently received the back-to-school issue of the newsletter from The Center for Education Reform (Washington, DC), the private think tank of a very smart lady named Jeanne Allen. She writes, "Al Gore on vouchers is insulting to one's intelligence. He rants endlessly about voucher schemes that would 'drain money from public schools...'"

But, do vouchers really drain money from public schools? Well, I did a little arithmetic. Take the example of a (typically failing) public school with an enrollment of one thousand students, and a (typically bloated) budget of \$10,000 per student, or \$10 million. Now assume that five kids receive vouchers worth \$5,000 each to go to a private school. (I realize that \$5K is more generous than usual, but it'll do just fine here.) Now the school's enrollment is 995 and the budget is reduced by \$25K to \$9,975,000. But there's a surprise; the school's revised revenue per student is now \$10,025.12. Hmmm.

Try it with vouchers for one hundred students: Money for vouchers: \$500K. Enrollment drops to 900 and the new budget is \$9,500,000. Revenue per student is now \$10,555.56.

Try it again, this time with half the students getting vouchers

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LPCT Files Freedom of Information Complaint, Gets Hearing.

by James Madison

HARTFORD—Shortly after the presidential election of 2000, the LPCT State Central Committee (SCC) decided to send information about the Libertarian Party to all Connecticut residents who are registered with other third parties.

The theory was that people who were registered with other third parties might actually be Libertarians at heart and just not realize it. Pat Buchanan effectively killed the Reform Party, so those folks are politically homeless. And many who supported the Green Party did so only because they liked Ralph Nader personally – not because they support the disgustingly socialist Green Party agenda.

The plan got even better when in early 2001, national sent out a letter outlining in full detail why the LP is miles ahead of all other third parties. At that point the SCC plan became a simple matter of copying the bulk of that letter, putting in a few customized Connecticut-related statements and sending it.

All of this was predicated on one thing: being able to get the names and addresses of all the members of all other third parties. This should have been the easiest step, because we knew the Secretary of the State (SOTS) had the information, and we knew we had the legal right to access it.

For several years ending in 1999, the SOTS consolidated all voter registration information, including party affiliation, into a centralized database..

Combine that with the Freedom of Information (FOI) act which states, essentially, that all citizens have the right to access all information owned by the government unless doing so would somehow cause harm to some party involved.

Ken Mosher, membership director, volunteered to spearhead the task of getting the names. After making the initial contact with the SOTS and going through

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New Chairman to be Elected at Convention

by James Madison

My thanks to the LPCT and the State Central Committee (SCC) for giving me the honor of being your chairman for this past year.

It has been wonderful to serve the party in this vital role and has greatly expanded my understanding of how our party works and what it takes to make it successful.

Unfortunately, I will not be seeking or accepting the nomination for Chairman for another term when the election of party officers is held at the convention on October 6.

I feel that my true calling is as Communications Director. It is the position I held before becoming Chairman, and the one in which I would like to serve going forward if the SCC will grant it to me.

In that capacity, I will continue to produce the monthly newsletter, send out press releases, write promotional and fund-raising letters, and speak for the party before groups and on television and radio.

Extra thanks to those key individuals who are the backbone of the party. I won't name names for fear of missing somebody, but being chairman has made me realize how many good people we have in the LPCT, how competent and responsible they are in making this party work, and how great our nation would be if people like these ran the government.

If you are interested in serving as chairman, as any other party officer, or as a member of the SCC, be sure to attend the business portion of the convention on October 6th.

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Vouchers

(this is a really bad school). Cost of the vouchers: \$2,500,000. The school's budget would be cut to \$7,500,000. That means the per student revenue would be \$7,500,000 divided by 500 kids, or \$15,000 each. Wow, that's four or five times the average cost for private school tuition!

OK, now suppose ALL the children want vouchers. The new enrollment would, of course, be zero, while the budget would still be up there at \$5,000,000.

In this situation, life would be much improved for the former students at half the cost to the taxpayers. The non-teaching half of the empty school's employees could be let go, but there would remain a ludicrous situation: A full cadre of teachers getting paid to do nothing because their contracts say they can't be fired. The property owners would soon revolt, I predict, requiring that their property taxes pay only for the vouchers for their kids, and that the other half of their taxes be canceled forthwith.

Oh, yeah, the teachers... Well, the ones who could hack it would probably be hired by the private schools that had so many new students, but at market salaries instead of union-controlled, government-monopoly salaries.

The ultimate goal is that we return to a situation in which parents take responsibility for the education of their own children, and privately funded scholarships would provide for those who need help with tuition. But until that ideal can be reached, let's not believe the schoolers who only want more and more money for their failed government system.

Attention Libertarian Business Owners

The LPCT is putting together a list of all businesses in Connecticut that are owned or operated by party members. If yours is such a business or you know of one, please send the name of the business, the name of the party member who owns/runs it, the address of the business, and a 15-word or less description of what the business provides. Send information to: James Madison, 6234 Town Brooke, Middletown, CT 06457 or e-mail chairman@lpct.org.

We will be publishing the list on the LPCT web site and providing the list in literature handed out at the convention.

Convention Reminder

If you haven't done so already, be sure to register for the LPCT State Convention on Oct. 6. You should have already received a full information packet about the convention. If not, call 860-635-8334 or e-mail chairman@lpct.org.

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FOI

the usual bureaucratic run-around, Ken was informed that getting the roughly 1,000 names would require paying a fee of \$300. Ken informed them that this is vastly more than the \$0.03 per name that the FOI act stipulates and that the LPCT refused to pay it.

After a few more weeks of fruitless negotiation, Ken filed a complaint with the FOI Commission. The commission granted a hearing on July 31 with Commissioner Sherman D. London presiding over the case, "Ken Mosher and Libertarian Party of Connecticut v. Election Services Manager, State of CT and Maria Greenslade, Deputy Secretary of the State Docket # FIC 2001-030 and FIC 2001-059."

"My argument boiled down to, 'Read the statute 1-212(b)(4); it's very clear,'" said Ken in summarizing the events at the hearing. "[The SOTS attorney's] argument boiled down to '\$300 is a bargain for this CD, which costs us at least \$1,700 to produce,' and a *very* weak interpretation of the same statute I was quoting, which says 'not to exceed \$0.03 per *name* delivered.' He argued that since I asked for name, address, and party affiliation, and the statute only specifies *name* that my request was outside the scope of the statute."

Ken went on to point out to the commissioner that the statute cannot mean that only the name is to be provided, since a name by itself is essentially worthless and must have other items such as address and party affiliation to be of any use.

The purpose of the hearing was only to gather information, not reach a decision. Commissioner London must now review the information and make a recommendation to the full commission. The commission will rule on the case during an upcoming meeting. The public may attend that meeting but may not speak on the issue. The date for that meeting has not yet been set.

"All in all, it was a spanking good time," said Ken. "I was in the mood for a tussle with the government."

Watch The Connecticut Libertarian for further news on the case.

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Meeting Notice: The SCC will meet at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 18, at the Wethersfield Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway (Route 99) in Wethersfield. All members welcome. Agenda:

- Minutes of last meeting
- Treasurer's Report
- Chairman's Report
- Current Business
 - Last minute convention preparation.
 - Ballot access residency lawsuit
- New Business
 - SCC members to be elected at convention.
 - Party officers to be elected at convention.

Directions: From North: I-91 South to Exit 28 (See Rt. 5 & 15 South). From South: I-91 North to Exit 28 (See Rt. 5 & 15 South). From East, I-84 West to Exit 57 (See Rt. 5 & 15 South). From West, I-84 East to I-91 South, to Exit 28 (See Rt. 5 & 15 South). *Route 5 & 15 South:* Take Exit 85 (Route 99/Silas Deane Hwy) South. At the 4th traffic light, turn right onto Church St. Turn into first driveway on left.